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ON PAGE **ALL**

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Shcharansky Reunited With Family

9-Year Ordeal for Freed Soviet Dissident Ends in Jerusalem

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JERUSALEM, Aug. 25—The family of freed Soviet human rights activist Anatoly Shcharansky arrived in Israel tonight after leaving the Soviet Union earlier in the day, their arrival marking the dramatic conclusion of a nine-year personal ordeal that captured world attention and focused it on the plight of Soviet Jewry.

A beaming Shcharansky walked into the immigration lounge at Ben-Gurion Airport here with his arms held tight around his frail 78-year-old mother, Ida Milgrom. She alternately smiled and wept, constantly touching with her hands the face of the son she had not seen for more than a year and whose freedom from a Soviet prison she had campaigned for from 1977 until last February, when he was finally released.

Milgrom, who dabbed at her eyes but kept her composure during a brief press conference, said only a few words in Yiddish, which Shcharansky translated as "she says she is very happy to be with all her children."

"I can say that the case of Shcharansky has ended now," said Shcharansky's brother Leonid, who left the Soviet Union with his wife and two sons. "I am very happy that I am in Israel," he said.

The family, which had been reunited in Vienna earlier today, looked exhausted and besieged by several dozen camera crews and photographers who descended on the diminutive Shcharansky and his even smaller mother as they emerged this evening into the airport lounge.

Shcharansky told reporters that his family's release would not change his feelings toward the Soviet government nor lessen the campaign to free other Jews. "I won't change my attitude toward the Soviet government until all those Jews who want to leave are able to do so," he said. "This was never my personal struggle, and it continues."

Exit visas for Milgrom, Leonid Shcharansky and his family—his wife Raya, who is not Jewish, and sons Alexander, 14, and Boris, 1—had been promised by Soviet officials in February as part of the secret written agreement under which Anatoly Shcharansky was exchanged for five convicted East Bloc spies.

But Shcharansky, who came to Israel the day of his release and settled here with his wife, Avital, later accused Moscow of holding up the exit visas to blackmail him into maintaining public silence on the question of Soviet Jewry, which he pointedly refused to do. His wife left the Soviet Union the day after their wedding in 1974.

He said tonight that his family's release showed that "quiet diplomacy" in itself would not succeed in freeing Soviet dissidents "if it isn't accompanied by a strong public campaign, by public pressure [and] by open demands to the Soviet Union to let our people go." Israel has estimated that about 400,000 Soviet Jews wish to emigrate, but last year only 1,140 were granted exit visas.

Anatoly Shcharansky, 38, was arrested in 1977 and convicted the following year of spying for the United States, a charge that both he and then-president Jimmy Carter denied. He was sentenced to three years in prison and 10 in a labor camp.